

The marionettes were an early offshoot of the *mimus*, and the modern Punch-and-Judy show is a descendant in part of both. For the mores the *mimus* and the marionette theater are a thousandfold more important than the great tragedies, but the former have left no mark on history. They never were written down; the actors are dead; their reputation is forgotten. The mores contain the effect as a fact but no explanation of it. From the time of Alexander the Great that which is common, popular, realistic prevailed in politics and literature. The heroic and ideal-poetic declined and was made an object of satire in the *mimus*. "The trivial, prosaic, and libertine taste of the Macedonian princes of Egypt and Syria at last reigned alone in enslaved Greece." Then, under different forms and names, nothing remained but mimes, realistic representation of common life.¹ The Olympian gods and Homeric heroes were burlesqued for fun. The *mimics* won acceptance at courts and in higher circles. It was developed into the so-called "hypothesis" and won a place on the stage. The most distinguished maker of hypotheses was Philistion,² who lived at the beginning of the Christian era. They became popular throughout the Greco-Roman world in the first centuries of the Christian era.³ The emperor Tiberius caused actors to be expelled from Italy as disturbers of the peace, and because the old Oscan farce, once amusement for the common people, had become indecent.⁴ Out of the common origin of all dramatic exhibitions (sec. 616) the *mimus* kept the corn demons, or growth demons, which always commanded the interest of husbandmen. The actors of this rôle wore masks in which

the features of a low and sensual countenance were greatly exaggerated. An artificial phallus (sec. 473) was worn outside of the dress, and the entire region of the hips was enlarged so as to produce a conventional, extravagant, and stereotyped figure, like the modern clown, punch, or Mephisto, being, in fact, in some measure, their ancestor.⁵ Greek vases represent these

¹ Magnin, *Origines*, 161.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27-29.

² Reich, *Der Mimus*, 12.

⁴ Tacitus, *Annales*, IV,

14.

⁵ Preuss (*Archiv fur Anthrop.*, XXIX, 182) suggests that Falstaff's fatness may be a survival of one of the physical features of the stereotyped buffoon.